

VZCZCXRO6544

PP RUEHAG RUEHAST RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDA RUEHDBU RUEHDF RUEHFL RUEHIK  
RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHLH RUEHLN RUEHLZ RUEHNEH RUEHNP RUEHPOD RUEHPW  
RUEHROV RUEHSK RUEHSL RUEHSR RUEHVK RUEHYG  
DE RUEHTA #1454 2450402  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
P 020402Z SEP 09  
FM AMEMBASSY ASTANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6124  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY 1889  
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1259  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 0916  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 1957  
RHMFIUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY  
RHMFISS/CDR USTRANSCOM SCOTT AFB IL PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEFAAA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY 1446  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY 1342  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO PRIORITY 2765  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 2450

UNCLAS ASTANA 001454

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, DRL/IRF

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [KISL](#) [KZ](#)

SUBJECT: KAZAKHSTAN: "WHAT DO YOU THINK THIS IS, A POLICE  
STATE?"

1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

2. (SBU) While the Ambassador was getting a haircut on September 1 at a Turkish-owned unisex salon in Astana, the client in the next chair was cracking up the stylists with a high-volume, endless stream of jokes about how people avoid the rigors of Ramadan. Some drink secretly because they'd rather die than give up their vodka, and isn't it curious how many people have urgent and prolonged business to conduct in Europe? He ribaldly speculated about "Number One in Ak Orda" (the Presidency), and which wife -- "the official one or the other ones" -- would be most relieved to be free of his attentions during daytime through the Holy Month of Ramadan. They all then ran through the list of Central Asian nationalities, laughing about which Muslims were the most "backward" -- i.e., most observant -- but reached no consensus.

3. (SBU) When the jokester got up and put on his jacket, it was a uniform jacket. It turned out he was the deputy chief of police for the local district. A bit later the Ambassador asked his Kazakh stylist if people couldn't get into trouble for joking about Islam and Number One like that in public? The heavily tattooed, spiky-haired stylist looked astonished and asked, "What do you think this is, a police state?"  
HOAGLAND